



New York - New Jersey
Harbor & Estuary Program
www.harborestuary.org

RESTORATION WORK GROUP

of the New York – New Jersey Harbor & Estuary Program
*Co-Chairs: Lisa Baron (Army Corps of Engineers),
Marit Larson (NYC Parks)*

www.HarborEstuary.org

Meeting, October 22, 2018

Conference Call

866 – 266-8040

Pin: 44373

10:00 – 11:30

I. Welcome/introductions

Attendance is at the end of this document. Andy Peck will no longer be an official representative for the Nature Conservancy (TNC), leaving Emily Maxwell to represent TNC. Andy will coordinate with Emily and may provide updates over time on the status of Hudson River restoration if needed. Ross Feltes has retired and will no longer represent the NJ Sports & Exposition Authority (NJSEA). Lisa will reach out to invite Brett Bragin from NJSEA to replace Ross as a representative on the RWG.

II. Minutes

A draft of the minutes from our June meeting were sent out by email. The members have until 10/29/18 to turn in comments or corrections to the document. They will be voted on at the next meeting along with the current minutes.

III. Discussion on HEP Conference Habitat Workshop

Isabelle explained why we wanted to have a participatory session on habitat quality at the conference and asked the group for input on the methods and scope. Carl Anderson suggested lightning talks where presenters could share their results but also focus on the methods they used for monitoring. The group generally agreed that this may be a good format. Marit offered to help organize. Lisa suggested that it may be good to have the members of the RWG outline the projects that are being advanced among the agencies/organizations and the types of monitoring that is being done. This would provide dual benefits of highlighting the status of ongoing restoration, but also provides the framework to discuss the various types of monitoring methods currently being utilized.

IV. Update on Comprehensive Restoration Plan/Feasibility Study

Lisa Baron updated us on the USACE progress of the HRE Feasibility Study. Based on the September 5th Agency Decision Milestone meeting, some of the 33 original sites that were included in the draft HRE Feasibility Report were removed and a total of 22 restoration sites were approved to move forward. There was unfortunate wording in the last WRDA that stated that NPS had to provide funding for the projects that were located on their property within the Jamaica Bay Unit of Gateway National Recreation Area (including the Jamaica Bay marsh islands and Dead Horse Bay. There is consensus that NPS will not obtain the funding to implement these projects. The next steps for the study include preparation of more detailed designs, cost estimates, relative sea level change analysis

with the low/high curves (intermediate curves have already been evaluated), regulatory compliance and detailed monitoring and adaptive management for each site. The final report will be due to USACE HQ in June 2019 for final review and approval. There will be a Senior Leaders Panel which will discuss the release of the final approved Feasibility Report and Chief's Report for State and Agency review. The reports will then be submitted to the ASA(CW) and then to Congress for authorization and appropriations.

The group attempted to watch a video that the NY District and Mobile District produced about restoration in the HRE but we had technical issues and had to watch following the call. The video can be accessed here: <https://youtu.be/1hisn42KwRg>.

V. Tracking the Enclosed and Confined Waterways TEC

Last year the group determined that we needed to find a new way to track progress with the Enclosed and Confined Waterways TEC. The current tracking method was not recording any of the progress that has been made in water quality in these basins. Isabelle reported to the group how she approached HEP's Water Quality Workgroup with this issue and they advised her to put together a list of the basins and what monitoring data was available within them. The restoration work group agreed that this was a logical first step and Isabelle will work on this for the next meeting.

VI. Update on the Environmental Monitoring Plan

Rosana Da Silva gave the group an update on HEP's Environmental Monitoring Plan that will be released on November 16th. The plan will have three components geared to different audiences: 1. An interactive map on our website showing who is doing what kind of monitoring where. The map is filterable by goal (e.g. water quality, habitat, toxics) and by environmental indicator and can be used to link to where to access the data; 2. A story map, geared for the public about the environmental indicators; and 3. A report on monitoring recommendations, highlighting data gaps and where HEP would like to see additional monitoring.

VII. Further updates from the group

NY-NJ Baykeeper

Meredith Comi relayed that it had been a difficult season due to scheduling and weather. However, they were able to install 120 more oyster castles with spat for their living shoreline at Naval Station Earle. They have also been trapping sediment and monitoring biodiversity.

STAC

Judith Weiss announced the release of a good recent article by Dorothy Peteet on the marshes in Jamaica Bay and how they are sediment starved and not keeping up with sea level rise. Isabelle distributed the paper by email to the group.

USFWS

Steve Mars reported that USFWS was working on the fish monitoring at the Weston Mills Dam and Wreck Pond, a tidal pond on the Atlantic coast of NJ.

USACE

In addition to the HRE Feasibility Study update, Lisa relayed the District is advancing the designs and cost estimates for 8 Hudson River CRP sites. They are preparing for a milestone meeting in December and expect to have the draft report for the Hudson River released to the public in March 2019. Three of the sites are fish passage projects on Moodna Creek and Rondout Creek. The District is working with NYSDEC, Scenic Hudson and the Hudson Riverkeeper to secure permission or acquisitions from dam property owners.

NYC Parks

Sawmill Creek mitigation bank is largely completed and EDC is reviewing credit requests. Sunset Creek marsh restoration is moving slowly because of contamination issues but ground is broken. Parks also has ongoing projects in design and pre-construction at Bayswater, Idelwild, Alley Creek, Hammond cove, Pugsley Creek (Port Authority designing) and Bridge Park (On the Harlem R.). Marit attended the Society of Ecological Restoration Mid-Atlantic and New England regions conference last week and can share thoughts or presentations. The Bronx river fish monitoring saw 169 alewife accessing the ladder this year, which is double last year's number.

NJDEP

John King indicated that NJDEP and USACE is finalizing the scope of work for the A/E design consultant for the Liberty State Park project. The USACE is currently in the contracting process and will be conducting field work and preparing engineering designs through 2019-2020.

NOAA

Carl Alderson reported that the monitoring has been completed (post dam removal) for the Weston Mill dam project. They have found young of the year shad are utilizing the 6 new miles of habitat and are now accessing the next barrier upstream, which indicates that there has been successful spawning.

Attendance:

Lisa Baron, (chair) USACE
Marit Larson, (chair) NYC Parks
Carl Alderson, NOAA
Meredith Comi, Baykeeper
John King, NJDEP
Jim Lodge, HRF
James MacDonald, NYSDEC
Susan Maresca, NYSDEC
Steve Mars, USFWS
Emily Maxwell, TNC
Dana Mecomber, PANYNJ
Francis O'Shea, TPL
Robert Pirani, NY-NJ HEP
Ken Scarlatelli, NYSDEC
Isabelle Stinnette, NY-NJ HEP
Carter Strickland, TPL
Judith Weis, STAC
Rick Winfield, USEPA